

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

6:00 p.m.

Manchester High School – Room 293

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Scappaticci,
Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the
Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant
Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess,
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT: Pazda

A. OPENING

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chris Pattacini, Co-Chair of the Personnel & Finance Committee. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

B. OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Pattacini reviewed that this is a meeting of the Personnel & Finance Committee. The members of that committee are Mr. Crockett, Mr. Leon, Ms. Hagenow, and himself. Mr. Pattacini went over the budget process, noting the first steps are budget workshops to develop a budget to submit to the Board of Directors. Next, the Town Manager and the Board of Directors develops a town budget. In the Spring, the town will let us know what our budget is and we will hold another set of workshops to align the budget to the allocation.

C. SUPERINTENDENT'S BUDGET PRESENTATION

Dr. Kisiel thanked the district administration as well as Mr. Geary for their hard work on the budget. He reminded everyone that education is not just about the numbers and tax dollars, but about a plan to support an education program and what students need to succeed and become productive members of society. Dr. Kisiel's budget presentation can be found on the district website. He reminded everyone that Alliance Grant funds cannot be used to supplant operating budget expenses but only for education reform, such as the SAAM program. Some items that previously were part of the Alliance Grant funding have been moved into our general operating budget.

Dr. Kisiel also made note that one item that was brought up by a member of the community was the fact that the substitute teachers were not put out to bid and, although there is no competition in that field currently, in good faith we will be putting that contract out to bid in the future.

D. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Leon thanked Dr. Kisiel, Mrs. Brooks, and the administration for their work on this budget. This is his 5th year of budget workshops and this budget has been the most thorough and best explained of them all. He asked Mr. Geary if he was comfortable with this budget, since he will be Superintendent when it is implemented. Mr. Geary stated he was.

Mr. Leon noted a small decrease in postage costs and wondered if it had been taken into account that next week postage is increasing. Mrs. Brooks stated that with electronic communication, we do not mail as much anymore.

Mr. Leon wondered if we could to line striping in-house at all to cut down on the \$20,000 cost. Mrs. Brooks will look into that.

Mr. Leon felt that putting the minimum for capital repairs is a disgrace. As for the three new assistant coaches he wondered if that will equal more wins?

Ms. Cruz felt the administration did a good job with a clear, detailed, and easy to understand budget. She wondered how many interns from the University of New Haven we get. Mrs. Brooks stated it was 2-3 at about \$8,000 each, which is a great value.

Mr. Crockett stated the administration did a wonderful job and he is impressed with the numbers. He wondered what percent of this budget is a fixed cost that we cannot touch. Dr. Kisiel estimated 93%.

Ms. Hagenow questioned a capital projects cost at Martin and it was clarified by Dr. Kisiel that the exact nature was a security issue not to be discussed.

Ms. Hagenow questioned why we have several different lines for fire alarm testing and repairs. Mrs. Brooks pointed out that there are different systems in different buildings.

Mr. Pattacini questioned the increase of \$426,000 or 10.5% in the certified administrator line. Dr. Kisiel clarified there is one additional administration, the new Director of Teaching & Learning, at a cost of approximately \$150,000 plus benefits. This is partially offset by the reduction of 2 FTE teachers. Also, negotiated increases in administrator contracts, including the new Superintendent, along with the fact that the last Director of Teaching & Learning's salary was not in the budget, account for the full increase.

Mr. Pattacini wondered why a 40% increase (\$88,000) in overtime. Mrs. Brooks stated that every year we go over budget so she is trying to get that back in line.

Mr. Pattacini asked about the town pension and it was noted that those figures come directly from the Town. Mr. Pattacini wondered if the town is confident in their numbers. Mrs. Brooks stated it is based on salaries and we will have fewer paras. She feels the number is accurate, though that number can go down, but never goes up.

Mr. Pattacini brought up the tuition for the Vo-Ag program, which is a unique program. He wondered if once a student is enrolled in that school and they drop the Vo-Ag program, are they returned to MHS. They are. Mr. Leon wondered if it had been looked at putting a program like that in our curriculum. Dr. Kisiel stated that we do not have the facilities for such a program.

Mr. Pattacini wondered if any of the shared services with the town could be discussed with the town, specifically the IT position. Dr. Kisiel stated the Information Systems position does need to be discussed, as was outlined in the efficiency study, though it has not been done yet. Also, there is an issue with Munis and we are not 100% happy with it, and it is in discussion.

Mr. Stafford asked about the replacement vehicles, specifically the Torro mower. He wondered if this would affect the field maintenance, which is a shared service. Mrs. Brooks stated field maintenance is a separate issue from the lawn maintenance so it would not have an impact on that line.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for their work and pointed out that eight other district administrators were present tonight. He notes that is a testament to the commitment of our team.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, felt it was a good presentation, concise and to the point. He understood it well. Mr. Stringfellow offered several suggestions of articles that might be helpful in budget talks. Regarding the Race Relations class that has been changed to Global Studies, he is glad that course was updated. He also noted it is good to see diversity in the audience.

Charlotte Harvey, a student, is a senior at MHS. She has noticed a decline of interest in education. She feels no one cares about education or being cultured and she finds it ridiculous to increase athletic support spending and lower the funding on books. She wants to know how students can learn if they do not have literature. While she thinks football is great, she feels being articulate and being able to hold a conversation and express thoughts and feelings is more

important and she thinks the priorities are mixed up. She apologized for being sassy.

F. CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Leon felt this was not an outrageous increase to the budget. He noted any additional questions regarding the budget should be directed to Dr. Kisiel as soon as possible. If there are no further questions, Mr. Leon feels we may not need all three workshops scheduled. Mr. Pattacini agreed and noted questions should be directed to Dr. Kisiel by Monday so he can have time to prepare a response before next Wednesday's budget workshop. If we are in agreement, we could consider placing the budget approval on the next Board agenda.

Dr. Kisiel stated he will put his presentation on the website so the public has access and has an opportunity to come to the next budget workshop with any questions.

Mr. Pattacini stated it is great to see students advocating for their beliefs and he also pointed out the number of students in the audience, engaged in this activity, was impressive.

G. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

8 in favor.

The next budget workshop will be held January 22nd at 6:00 p.m. in Rm. 293 of the MHS Freshman Center.

Adjournment 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary